ATLAS

KID COLT OUTLAW

BLAZING ADVENTURES OF THE WILD WEST!!

KID COLT OUTLAW

SEPT.

NO. 30

10¢

CODE APPROVED COMICS

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE!

"KILLER OF THE PLAINS!"

"THE HAIR TRIGGER!"

YA MIGHT AS WELL LET GO NOW, KID... AND DIE WITH ALL YER FINGERS!

ON SALE MONTHLY

Hi there, Pal! Win Some of these **100** Silver Anniversary Prizes!

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Which of these **2 ME'S is YOU ?**

that 125 lb.—6 ft. ▪ CHICKEN CHESTED **WEAKLING** BELOW WAS ME *A FEW SHORT WEEKS AGO*

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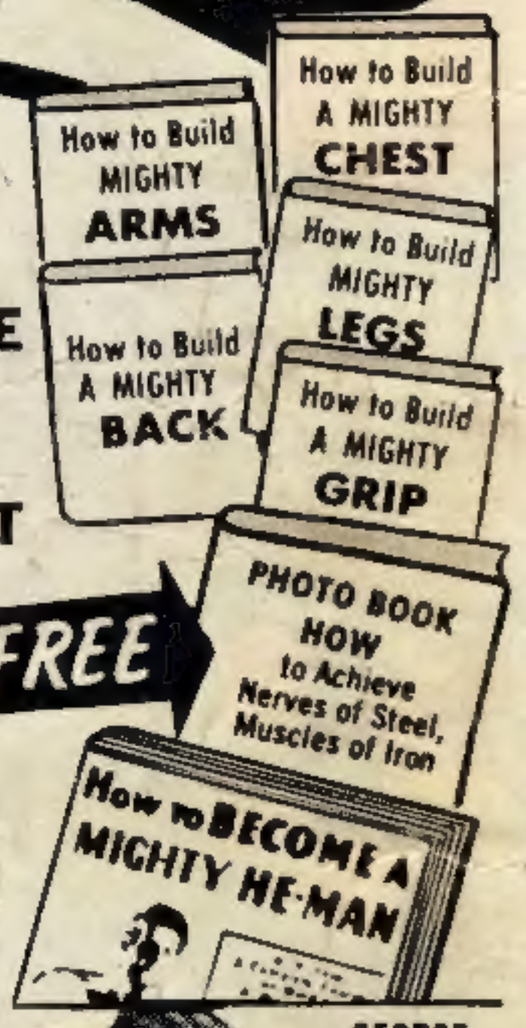
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FREE

There's that skinny scarecrow JOHN. Let's pass him by!

John Sill before

JOHN SILL was a 125 lb. 6 ft. WEAKLING LOOK at him NOW. A MOVIE-STAR HE-MAN from Head to Toe **as YOU can be soon!**

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KID COLT OUTLAW is published monthly by LEADING MAGAZINE CORP. Office of Publication: 270 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y. Entered as second-class matter at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Additional entry at Canton, Ohio. Copyright 1953 by LEADING MAGAZINE CORP., 270 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y. Vol. 1, No. 30, September 1953 issue. Price 10c per copy. Subscription rate $1.45 for 12 issues including postage. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions appearing in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. Printed in the U.S.A. Monroe Froehlich, Jr., Business Manager.

KID COLT OUTLAW

RUSTLERS... ARRGGHH!

JACK KELLER C854

CATTLE IS THE WEALTH OF THE WEST, AND HUMAN VULTURES PREY ON THIS "MONEY-ON-THE-HOOF"... RUSTLERS, KILLERS, MEN WHO LIVE BY NO OTHER LAW THAN THE LAW OF THE GUN...

ARIZONA WAS A RUSTLER'S PARADISE! IN THE BREAKS AND VALLEYS OF THE RIMROCK RANGE, WHOLE HERDS COULD BE HIDDEN...

THIS WAS THE LAIR OF THE LASHER GANG, THOSE RIMROCK BREAKS, AND FROM THERE LASHER AND HIS GUNHAWKS RAIDED ARIZONA'S PRIME HERDS...

NICE HERD, LASHER! ALL PRIME!

YEAH... WE'LL THROW THEM IN RED BUTTE VALLEY AN' BLOT THE BRANDS! THEY'LL BRING PLENTY DINERO ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAINS!

THEY GOT CHET, THE DIRTY COYOTES!

EVERY HEAD OF MARKET BEEF... AND I WAS IN CHARGE OF THE HERD! I'D BETTER TELL DAD!

TOO BAD BLAINE WAS IN CHARGE WHEN THIS HAPPENED! HIS POP, OL' CLINT, WILL BLAME HIM, SURE AS SHOOTIN'!

YEAH! THE KID'S BEEN KIND'A WILD, AN' CLINT'S TOO TOUGH ON HIM! ONE OF THESE DAYS THOSE TWO'RE GONNA HAVE A BLOWUP...AN' *THIS* MIGHT BE THE DAY! THEY'RE TOO MUCH ALIKE...*BOTH BULLHEADED!*

AN HOUR LATER, AT THE DOUBLE D RANCH... CLINT DAWSON AND HIS FOREMAN, VANCE NEVERS, WERE DISCUSSING A SCREW-WORM EPIDEMIC, WHEN...

BLAINE! WHAT'RE YOU DOIN' HERE? YOU GET BACK TO THAT HERD!

THERE AIN'T NO HERD TO GET BACK TO! RUSTLERS HIT US... GOT THE WHOLE HERD! KILLED CHET AN' WOUNDED THREE MORE!

CONSARN THOSE MANGY RUSTLIN' RATS! GET THE MEN... WE'LL TRAIL EM!

WHOA! CALM DOWN, CLINT! YUH KNOW HOW MANY TIMES WE'VE TRAILED THEM COYOTES... US AN' THE OTHER RANCHERS! IT'D ONLY BE LIKE BEFORE! WE'D LOSE THEIR TRAIL IN THE BREAKS!

YOU'RE RIGHT, VANCE, BUT WE SIT LIKE BUMPS ON A LOG WHILE THOSE VARMINTS STEAL US BLIND!

LET'S TRY TRAILIN' THEM ANYWAY! LET'S DO *SOMETHIN'!*

YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH ALREADY! IF YOU'D BEEN ON YOUR TOES, YOU'D OF SPOTTED THEM BUZZARDS BEFORE THEY STOLE THE HERD RIGHT FROM UNDER YOUR NOSE!

HOLD ON, DAD! YUH CAN'T BLAME ME FOR THIS! THEY STAMPEDED THE HERD!

DON'T GIVE ME NO LYIN' EXCUSES! IF YOU'D'VE PAID AS MUCH ATTENTION TO RANCHIN' AS YOU'VE DONE TO RODEOIN' AN' RAISIN' GENERAL CAIN—

YOU EXPECT TOO MUCH FROM EVERYBODY! I'VE HAD MY FILL!

HOLD ON NOW, YOU TWO!

I'VE TRIED TO MAKE A MAN OF YUH, BUT I RECKON YUH AIN'T GOT THE STUFF EVEN IF YUH ARE MY SON!

WELL, YUH WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT *ME* ANY MORE! I'M GOIN' AN' I AIN'T COMIN' BACK! YOU'VE TRIED TO DICTATE EVERY MOVE I'VE MADE SINCE I WAS BORN! NOW I'M GOIN' ON MY OWN! I'LL SHOW YUH WHO'S A *MAN!*

NOW WAIT A MINUTE, YUH YOUNG SQUIRT!

HE'LL BE BACK, CLINT... DON'T WORRY!

I'LL HEAD UP INTO THE BREAKS! I'LL JOIN ONE OF THE OUTLAW GANGS! HE'LL HEAR ABOUT ME! THEN I'D LIKE TO HEAR HIM TELL ME I'M NOT A MAN! I'LL *SHOW* HIM!

RAGING, HURT, THE YOUNG COWBOY SPURRED FURIOUSLY INTO THE FOOTHILLS OF THE RIMROCK BREAKS...

WHOA! HEY, THAT AIN'T NO WAY TO BE RIDIN' ON A PATH LIKE THIS!

GET OUT OF THE WAY!

I'VE HAD ENOUGH ADVICE IN MY LIFE... I AIN'T TAKIN' IT FROM...*UGHH!*

DON'T EVER DRAW ON ME, FELLER! IF YOU WERE A MITE FASTER, I'D OF HAD TO MAKE THAT A *HEAD* SHOT!

WHRAM!

I'VE NEVER SEEN A DRAW LIKE THAT! SAY... I RECOGNIZE YOU NOW! DAD HAS PICTURES OF YOU! *YOU'RE KID COLT!* I'M BLAINE DAWSON, CLINT DAWSON'S SON! I... I'M SORRY I TRIED TO DRAW ON YOU!

FORGET IT! SO YOU'RE CLINT'S BOY? WHAT'RE YOU DOIN' HERE AT THE EDGE OF THE BREAKS, AN' LOOKIN' LIKE YUH SAT ON A HORNET'S NEST?

THEY BUILT A TINY FIRE OF GREASEWOOD, AND SQUATTED BEFORE IT AS IS THE HABIT OF MEN OF THE PLAINS...AND IN THE DANCING FIRELIGHT, YOUNG DAWSON BLURTED OUT HIS STORY...

I'VE GOT TO SHOW DAD! HE'S TALKED SO MUCH ABOUT YOU, THAT I FIGURE IF I BECOME AN OUTLAW LIKE YOU, MAYBE HE'D RESPECT ME, TOO!

I SEE! WELL, LET'S BED DOWN FOR THE NIGHT! WE'LL PALAVER MORE ABOUT THIS COME MORNIN'!

SHADOWS DANCED ON THE ROCKS BEHIND THE FIRE, LULLING BLAINE TO SLEEP...

OL' CLINT'S BEEN TOO HARD WITH THE BOY AN' WHAT HE'S TOLD HIM ABOUT ME HAS MADE THE KID THINK OUTLAWIN' IS A MIGHTY BIG THING! I DON'T RECKON IT WOULD DO ANY GOOD TO TRY AN' TURN HIM FROM HIS PURPOSE...

AND BY THE LIGHT OF DYING FLAMES, KID COLT REREAD A MONTH-OLD LETTER!

and maybe you can set this kid of mine right. He might listen to you seein' as he has a case of hero worship where you're concerned. Maybe you could help in this rustling business too. Ride up here Kid, and help out an old friend.

Clint

RECKON THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO...SHOW CLINT'S SON THAT OUTLAWIN' AIN'T WHAT HE THINKS IT IS! MAKE HIM SICK OF ANYTHING BRANDED "OUTLAW"! MAYBE THEN HE'LL SEE HOW CLINT, IN HIS ROUGH WAY, HAS BEEN TRYIN' TO SET HIM STRAIGHT!

DAWN STAINED THE EASTERN PEAKS WITH BLOOD RED, AND THE TWO MEN ROSE WITH THE DAY'S SIGNAL!

BLAINE, I'VE BEEN THINKIN'! RECKON YOU'RE RIGHT TO JOIN THE WILD BUNCH! I'LL DRIFT ALONG WITH YUH! MIGHT BE EASIER FOR YUH THAT WAY TO LEARN THE ROPES ONCE WE CONTACT ONE OF THE OUTLAW BANDS ON THE RIMROCK!

DOGGONE, THAT'S REAL FINE, KID!

THE SUN WAS HIGH AND HOT WHEN THEY RODE TOWARD A SMALL COLLECTION OF HUTS IN A TINY VALLEY...

RECKON FROM WHAT I'VE HEARD, YOU MUST BE LASHER! HOW COME YOUR OUTPOSTS DIDN'T SPOT US?

YEAH, I'M LASHER! MY OUTPOSTS SAW YUH AN' SENT US THE WORD! THEY RECOGNIZED YUH, KID COLT...THAT'S WHY THEY LET YUH PASS! WHO'S THIS OTHER HOMBRE?

MY PARD BLAINE! WE FIGURED TO JOIN UP WITH YUH, LASHER!

I DON'T LIKE IT, LASHER! I'VE HEARD STORIES ABOUT KID COLT...

ME TOO! LET'S GUN THESE JASPERS DOWN AN' PLAY IT SAFE!

I DON'T LIKE THAT KIND OF TALK, AN' I DON'T LIKE YOU TWO GENTS...AN' WHEN I DON'T LIKE A MAN, I KILL HIM! SLAP LEATHER, YOU BUZZARDS!

YOU ASKED FOR IT!

UGH!

ARRGG!

ANYBODY ELSE WANT'A TAKE A HAND IN THIS GAME?

PUT UP YOUR HOGLEGS, KID! I RECKON WE'LL BE PROUD TO HAVE YUH WITH US!

THE BODIES OF THE DEAD GUNMEN WERE DRAGGED AWAY AND BURIED! KID COLT AND HIS YOUNG PARD WALKED TO AN EMPTY CABIN...

DUDE WAS MY PARD! I DON'T TRUST THAT SLICK-DRAWIN' GENT, LASHER!

TAKE IT EASY, MUSCLES! HE'D SHOOT YUH TO DOLLRAGS IF YUH EVER RILE HIM! WE CAN USE HIS GUNS...FOR NOW!

YUH SHOT THEM DOWN LIKE DOGS, KID! HOW CAN YUH STAND THERE SO CALMLY DRINKIN' COFFEE AFTER...

FEEL A LITTLE SICKISH, HUH, BLAINE? YOU'VE GOT TO GET *USED* TO THAT KIND OF THING, BOY! WHEN YOU'RE TRAVELIN' WITH OUTLAWS...IT'S DOG EAT DOG! I'LL TEACH YUH A FAST DRAW AN' PRETTY SOON YOU'LL TAKE *PLEASURE* IN KILLIN'...LIKE ME!

C'MON, LET'S AMBLE AROUND A BIT AN' GET BETTER ACQUAINTED! YUH GOT TO KNOW THE MEN YUH RIDE WITH IN THIS TRADE...GOT TO KNOW 'EM TO THE BOTTOM OF THEIR ROTTEN HEARTS... *NEVER TRUST ONE OF THEM!*

SEEMS TO ME I HEAR CATTLE LOWING SOME PLACE CLOSE!

WE'VE GOT A TOP HERD IN RED BUTTE VALLEY, JUST A BIT NORTH THERE! IT'S THE DOUBLE D MARKET HERD... OLD CLINT DAWSON'S BEEF THAT WE RUSTLED LAST NIGHT!

HERE COMES OMAHA, LASHER!

OUR HERD! IF I COULD GET WORD TO DAD...

NONE OF THAT! YOU'RE AN *OUTLAW* NOW... YOUR HAND'S TURNED AGAINST *EVERYBODY*, EVEN YOUR PAW! REMEMBER THAT!

MESSAGE FROM YOUR PARTNER, LASHER!

KID, THIS PARD OF YOURS...I'VE SEEN HIM SOMEWHERE BEFORE! HE DON'T LOOK LIKE NO LAW DODGER TUH ME! THERE'S SOMETHIN' MIGHTY QUEER ABOUT YOU TWO JASPERS RIDIN' IN HERE!

YUH HANKERIN' FOR A DOSE OF LEAD POISONIN' TOO!

YUH KNOW YUH KIN BEAT ME TO THE DRAW! BUT IF I EVER GET YUH WITHOUT YOUR GUNS, I'LL PAY YUH BACK FOR KILLIN' MY PARD, DUDE!

YOU WON'T *HAVE* TO WAIT, AMIGO! HOLD MY .45'S, BLAINE! I'M GONNA TEACH THIS DUMB HUNK OF BEEF A *LESSON!*

C'MON, KID, C'MON! I CAN'T WAIT TUH GET MY HANDS ON YUH!

I'M GONNA TEAR YUH APART... I'LL MAKE MINCEMEAT OUTTA YA, YA COYOTE!

OOFF!

YUH PUT UP A BETTER BATTLE WITH YOUR MOUTH THAN YOUR HANDS!

THE TOUGH, HARD-BITTEN RUSTLER LEAPED UP AND AT THE KID, AND AS THEY CLOSED, A KNIFE FLASHED IN HIS HAND...

I'LL CUT YOUR HEART OUT!

THE KID'S HAND SLASHED DOWNWARD LIKE THE STRIKE OF A RATTLER, HITTING AND NUMBING THE HAND THAT HELD THE KNIFE...

YUH SNEAKIN' POLECAT!

OWW!

HERE'S YOUR KNIFE BACK, BUZZARD...WHERE IT'LL DO THE MOST GOOD!

AARROGHH!

THAT COFFEE OUGHT TO STILL BE HOT! LISTEN, PARD, I'VE GOT AN IDEA! I'M GONNA KILL LASHER... THEN YUH AN' ME WILL RUN THE OUTFIT! WE'LL BE THE *BIGGEST* OUTLAWS IN THE COUNTRY!

I... I DON'T WANT TO...

JUST A MINUTE, KID...

I'VE JUST GOTTEN WORD! CLINT DAWSON HAS ROUNDED UP ALL HIS CATTLE, SO TONIGHT WE RAID HIM... WIPE HIM OUT... KILL HIM AN' HIS MEN...

YOU'RE *NOT* KILLIN' MY DAD, YOU ROTTEN RUSTLER!

WHY YUH MEALY-MOUTHED YOUNG PUNK! I'LL... AARROGHHH!

THE FAT'S IN THE FIRE NOW! C'MON, WE'RE RIDIN' OUT OF HERE!

THEY KILLED LASHER! GET 'EM!

I'M WARNING DAD!

GOOD IDEA! THIS SETUP'S FINISHED FOR US, BECAUSE OF YOUR FOOLISHNESS! MAYBE YOUR OLD MAN'LL PAY US A REWARD FOR WARNIN' HIM...THEN WE'LL RIDE ON AN' STICK UP A COUPLE OF BANKS!

THEY RODE LIKE MAD DOWN FROM THE RIMROCK BREAKS, REACHING THE DOUBLE D RANCH BY NIGHTFALL!

BLAINE, BOY, WHERE HAVE YUH BEEN?

NO TIME TO EXPLAIN NOW, DAD! WE FOUND THE HERD IN A VALLEY!

HOW DID YOU FIND THE HERD IN RED BUTTE VALLEY?

LASHER HAD A PARTNER WHO GAVE HIM THE DOPE ON WHAT HERDS WERE READY AN' WHERE THEY WERE HELD, SO HE COULD RUSTLE THEM! ONLY *THAT* JASPER WOULD KNOW THE HERD WAS HELD IN *RED BUTTE VALLEY! YOU, VANCE!*

YOU'RE TOO *SMART* FOR YOUR OWN GOOD, MISTER!

I RECKON THIS'LL JUST ABOUT BUST UP THE RIMROCK GANG!

AARRGGHH!

BANG!

BANG!

WELL, BLAINE, LET'S YOU AN' ME... HEY, WHAT IS THIS?

I THOUGHT YOU WAS SUCH A GREAT GUY! NOW I KNOW... NO OUTLAW IS GOOD FOR ANYTHIN' BUT DOG MEAT! I'VE GOT A JOB TO DO HERE, SIDIN' DAD! FROM NOW ON THE ONLY OUTLAW I WANT TO SEE IS OVER MY GUNSIGHTS! RIDE ON, KID... YOU AN' YOUR KIND AIN'T WELCOME HERE!

THE KID SHRUGGED, GRINNED, AND LOPED AWAY INTO THE DARK...

HOLD IT A MINUTE, KID...

CLINT, I RECKON YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ANY MORE ABOUT BLAINE GOING TO THE BAD...I GUESS I CURED HIM OF OUTLAWIN'! JUST DON'T KEEP THE ROPE SO TIGHT ON HIM FROM NOW ON! HE'S FOUND HIMSELF... HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT!

THANKS, KID, FOR EVERYTHING! AND SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE, WHEN I TELL BLAINE THE TRUTH, I RECKON *HE'LL* THANK YUH TOO!

THE END

ATLAS FOR THE BEST IN WESTERN THRILLS LOOK FOR THE ATLAS SEAL ON THE COVER! ATLAS

THUNDER ON THE TRAIL

CAL Sanders came riding up up to the ranchhouse on the Bar T ranch just as Mike Halton, his boss, fresh from breakfast, came out on the porch.

"You look like bad news, Cal," Halton said to his foreman.

"Worse than bad, Mr. Halton," Sanders said. His face was grave. "Half the herd in the west pastures are stampeding!"

The rancher's head snapped to attention.

"Somebody fire a shot by accident?" he asked.

Cal shook his head.

"Locoweed!" he said hastily. "We found dried leaves all over the pasture! They been eatin' it for the past two days. Somebody's been scatterin' the stuff at night!"

Halton walked determinedly toward the cayuse corral. He jumped on his own cayuse and beckoned.

"Ain't much we can do out on the west pastures, Mr. Halton," Sanders said. "There's no stoppin' a locoweed stampede, and there's no stoppin' a third of the cows that's poisoned from conkin' out!"

"I know it!" his employer said. "This is a case for the Sheriff. It's up to him to find out who's tryin' to ruin me financially. Shorty!" A head poked itself up out of the bunkhouse. "Shorty, ring up the ranchers borderin' my land and ask 'em to help save what cows they can. We'd do it for them if we had to!"

Shorty nodded and lit out for the ranchhouse, as Halton and Sanders, his foreman clattered out of the ranchhouse yard. They headed for the road into Catonville.

Half an hour later they rode into town at a furious gallop, reined in at the Sheriff's office.

Sheriff Battins looked up from some paper work at his desk as Halton and Sanders came striding in.

"Trouble, Halton?" Battins askde, grinning.

Plenty," the rancher said grimly. "Battins, you've got to do something and do it fast. If I lose many more cattle I stand to lose my ranch as well. I'm depending on the sale of my cattle this year to pay off my mortgage."

Battins stood up in surprise.

"More locoweed?" he asked, and, when Halton nodded, he mused: "We figured the cases you reported to the county health officer last week just accidents, but this . . ."

"It'll mean three hundred head deader than last year's horns!" Halton exploded. "Battins, somebody's spreadin' dry locoweed leaves at night over my pastures!" His right hand twitched toward a hog-leg. "And if I get my hands on the ornery coyote, I'll . . ." He mastered himself with an effort. "Well, I will!"

"Can't be anybody in the district, Halton," Battins said. "Ever since you reported those first few cases and I posted the news, every bunkhouse waddy in the district's got sense enough to keep away from your land."

Battins stepped toward the door as a thunder of hoofs sounded down the street. Three men came up, their cayuses snorting, reined in and came into the office. Battins recognized them instantly; Wedridge, Horner and Saxby, owners of land bordering Halton's spread.

Wedridge fixed Halton with a glance, shook his head wearily.

"We turned out every man in our outfits, Halton, after Shorty phoned." He shook his head again. "Looks to me like your west pasture herd's almost a total loss. Our boys are still tryin' to stop 'em, but it looks hopeless!"

Halton glanced helplessly at the Sheriff.

"Come on," Battins said. "Let's get out there!"

As they rode along at a fast gallop, Battins turned the matter over in his head.

"You suspect any of your own bunkhouse boys?" he asked Halton.

The ranch owner shook his head in the negative.

"Most of 'em have been with me for years," he said.

"What about Sanders?" Battins asked, and he cast a long, shrewd glance at Halton's foreman who rode slightly in advance.

Halton's face dropped. Then he shook his head again.

"Cal's my right-hand man, Battins," he said positively. "It *couldn't* be him!"

Up ahead they saw a rider coming at them.

"There's a masked gang of four over in your north-east pasturage, Mr. Halton," he cried. "And they're spreadin' more locoweed."

"Spreadin' more locoweed?" Wedridge demanded.

"We got 'em on the run, but they may get away!" the waddy continued. "The Bar T outfit's headin' north, tryin' to cut 'em off. If they can, they'll have to cut back this way!"

"Let's high-tail it!" Battins suddenly barked. "There may be only four of 'em, but we'll need every man to catch 'em!"

The Sheriff plied his rowels drew his hogleg and let go.

The Sheriff began firing.

Whump!

CONTINUED BEFORE LAST STORY

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KID COLT OUTLAW

HE STOOD LIKE A SYMBOL OF REBELLION...MAN AGAINST THE ELEMENTS...A SAVAGE PRAYING FOR THE GODS TO ENDOW HIS MISSION OF VENGEANCE WITH SUCCESS...AND HIS PRAYERS WERE ANSWERED!

JACK KELLER

C 539

HE WAS EVERY INCH A KING, THE SAVAGE WHO LED HIS LITTLE BAND TOWARD THE WHITE SETTLEMENT...

IT WILL BE A GOOD DAY FOR US! THE EYES OF OUR WHITE BROTHERS WILL LOOK LONG WITH DESIRE AT THE RICHES WE BRING!

EYES WERE ALREADY LOOKING...EYES FILLED WITH GREED, LUST AND MURDER...

THAR THEY GO...AN' WE KIN LIVE EASY FER A LONG TIME ON WHAT THEY GOT IN THEIR SADDLE PACKS! LET'S MOVE IN!

THEY ATTACKED SWIFTLY, QUIETLY, TREACHEROUSLY...

WHRAM! BWAHM!

BANG!

BANG! BANG!

LEAVE THE HIDES! THEY'RE WUTHLESS! JUST PICK UP THE DUST AND STRIP THESE TRINKETS OFF THEIR CARCASSES!

GRAB YORESELVES SOME SKY, OR YORE HIDES WILL BE WUTHLESS! *REACH!*

K-KID COLT!

YOU LOOKIN' FER A CUT ON THIS HAUL, COLT?

NOPE! I DON'T SHARE MY KILLS WITH BUZZARDS!

IT WAS ROSCOE YATES WHOSE HANDS REACHED FOR HARDWARE FIRST... BUT THEY WERE DEAD HANDS EVEN BEFORE THEY TOUCHED COLD STEEL...

MEBBE THAT WASN'T YORE FIRST WRONG PLAY... BUT IT *WAS* YORE *LAST!*

THERE WERE NO PAUSES... NO GAPS IN THE STACCATO PEALS OF SIX-GUN THUNDER WHICH RUMBLED FROM THE MUZZLES OF THE BIG COLTS...

WHRAM! WHRAM! WHRAM! WHRAM!

CONSCIOUSNESS RETURNED TO CHIEF RED CLOUD'S NUMBED BRAIN AT THAT MOMENT, AND HE SAW...

YOU...MURDERER OF MY BROTHERS! YELLOW WOLF WHO ATTACKS FROM BEHIND!

WHAT?!

I AM UNARMED... BUT I WILL TEAR THE LIFE FROM YOUR EVIL BODY WITH MY BARE HANDS! WHY DO YOU NOT SHOOT ME? ARE YOU AFRAID?

YOU'RE LOCO! I GOT HERE AFTER THESE BUZZARDS BUSH-WHACKED YORE PARTY!

I SPEAK THE TRUTH! DON'T FORCE ME INTO SOME-THIN' I DON'T WANT TO DO! GO BACK TO YOUR PEOPLE! YOU HAVE BEEN AVENGED!

AVENGED? THE BLOOD OF MY BROTHERS IS ON MY HANDS! I, RED CLOUD, CHIEF OF A GREAT TRIBE TO RETURN IN DISGRACE? *NEVER!* YOU DIE... OR *I* DIE!

LISTEN TO REASON, RED BROTHER! THERE'S A POSSE COMIN' UP FAST... AN' THEY WON'T BELIEVE *EITHER* OF US! YOU BETTER RIDE HARD WHILE YOU CAN!

THAR THEY GO! MUST'A BEEN AN AWFUL MASSACRE SOMEPLACE AROUND HYAR, JUDGIN' BY THE SHOTS WE HEARD!

DEAD... EVERY LAST ONE OF 'EM! THOSE TWO WERE THE ONLY SURVIVORS!

3

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE...

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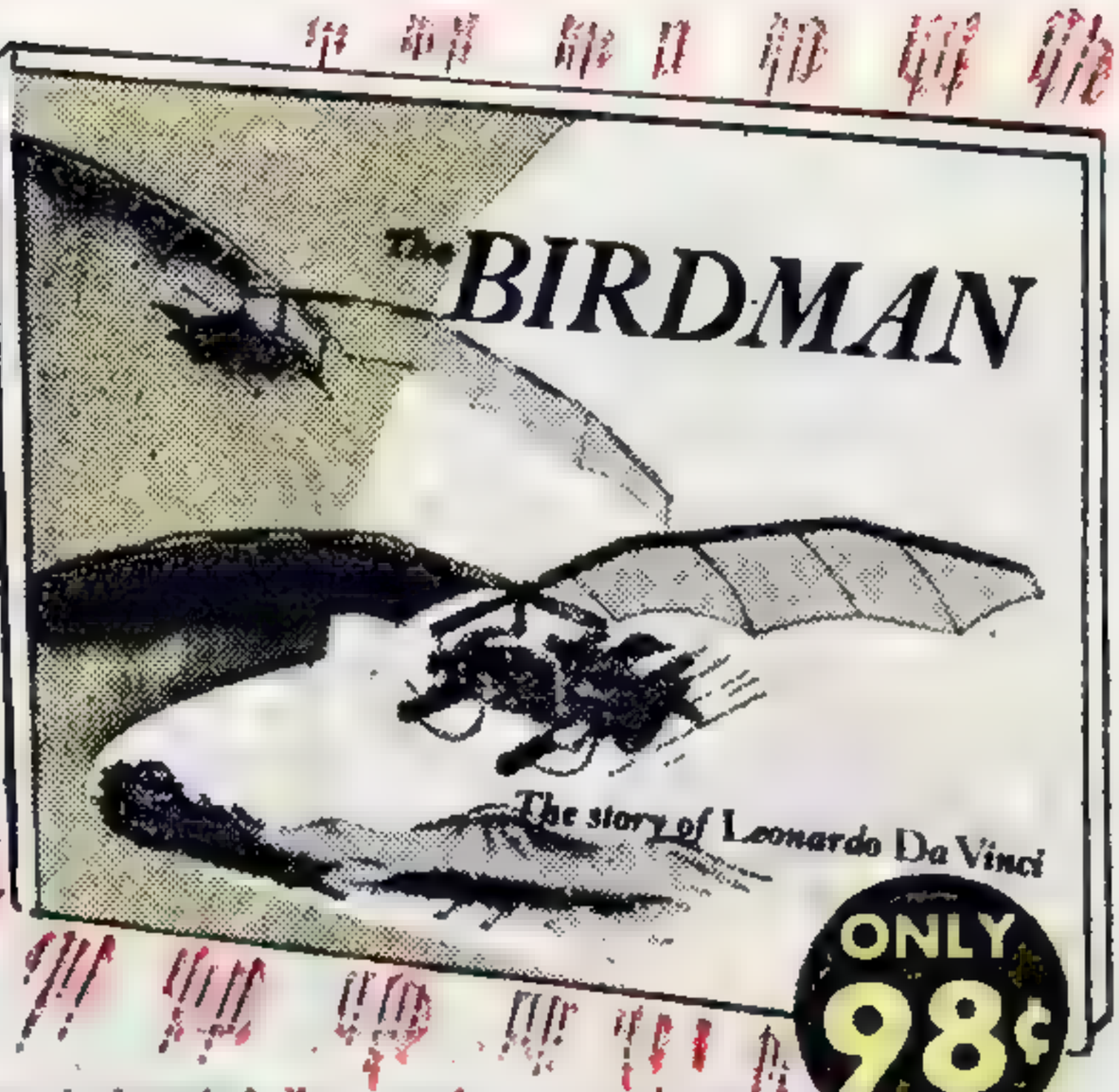

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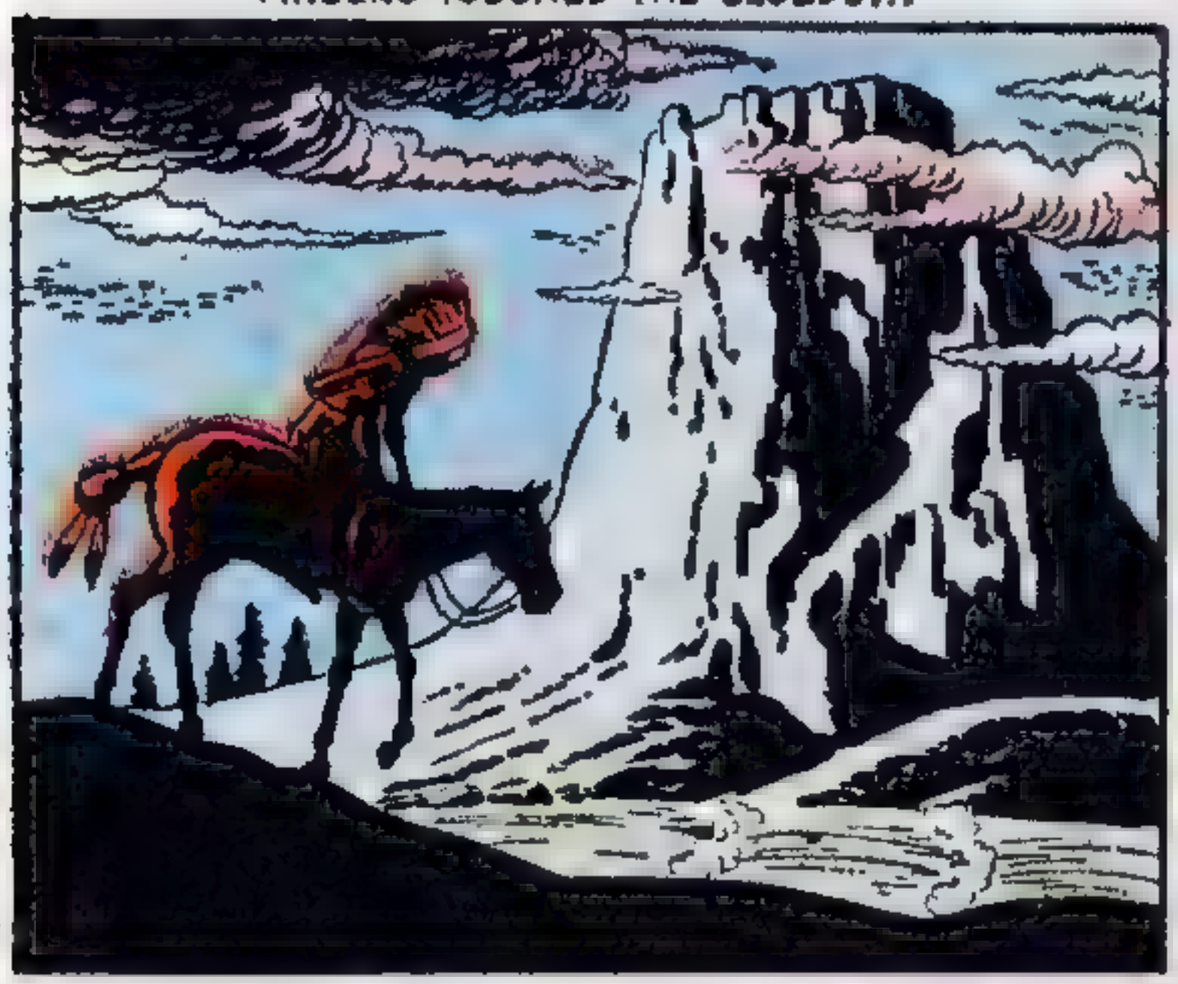
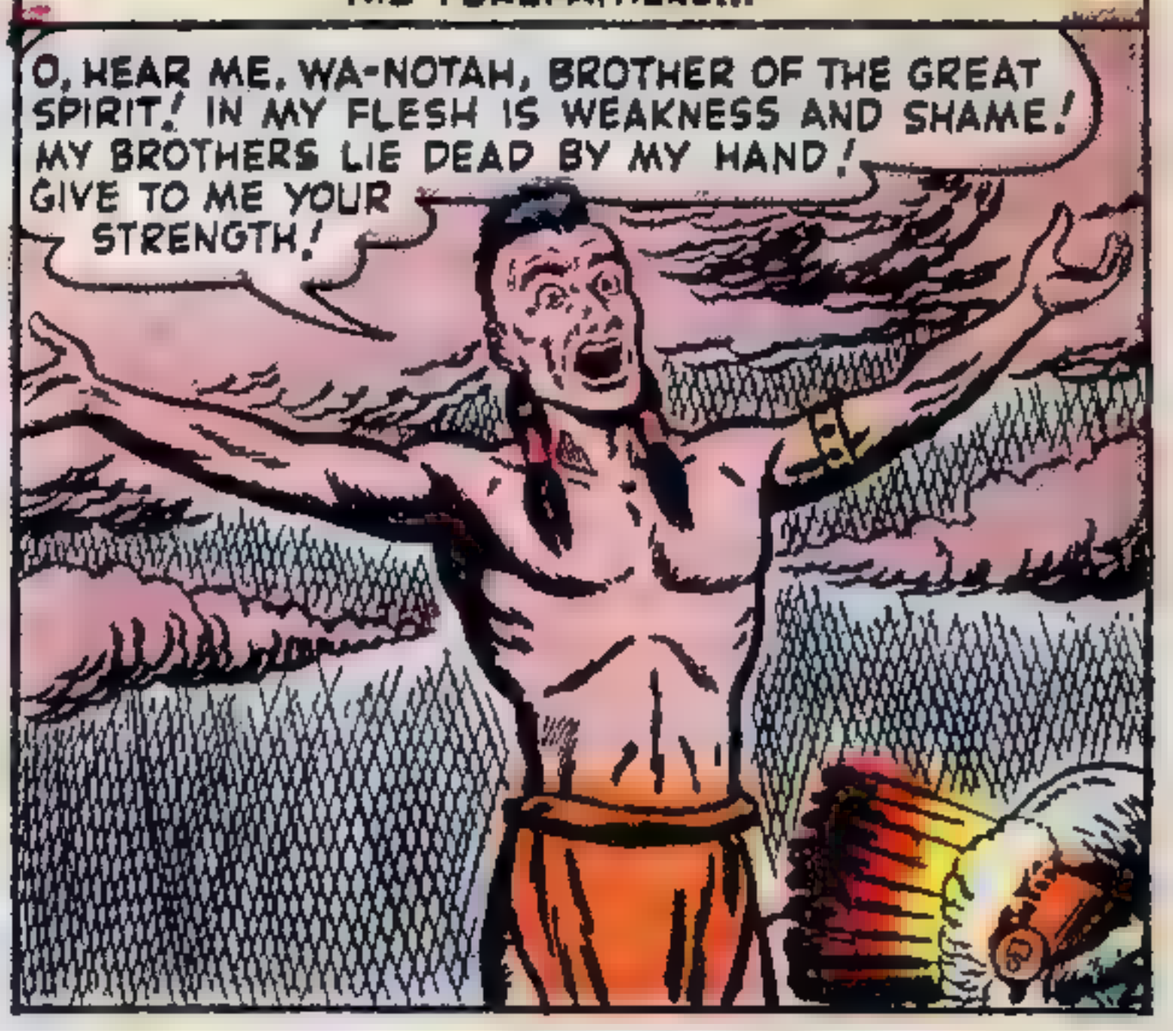
GNAWED BY SHAME AND HUMILIATION, THE ONCE-PROUD CHIEF SPURNED HIS HOME FIRES AND MADE HIS WAY UP THE FORBIDDING SLOPES OF MOUNT SHIWANEE WHOSE FINGERS TOUCHED THE CLOUDS...



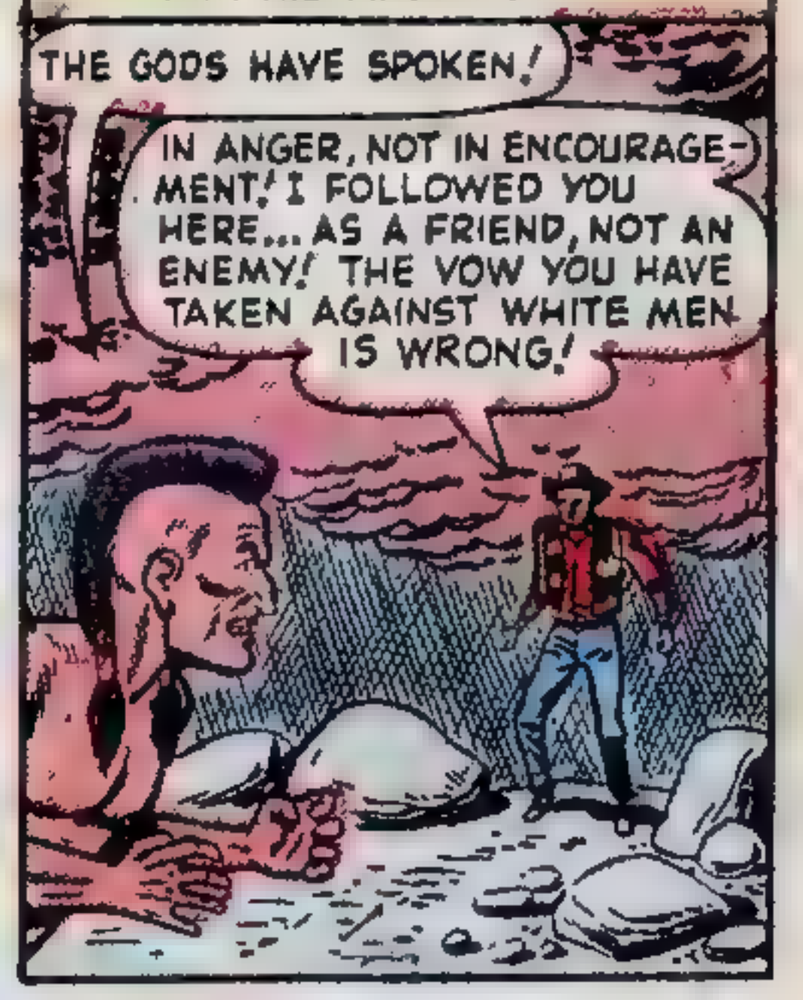
ONCE ON THE CREST, THE SAVAGE FLUNG AWAY HIS POSSESSIONS AND INCANTED THE SOLEMN RITES OF HIS FOREFATHERS...


O, HEAR ME, WA-NOTAH, BROTHER OF THE GREAT SPIRIT! IN MY FLESH IS WEAKNESS AND SHAME! MY BROTHERS LIE DEAD BY MY HAND! GIVE TO ME YOUR STRENGTH!

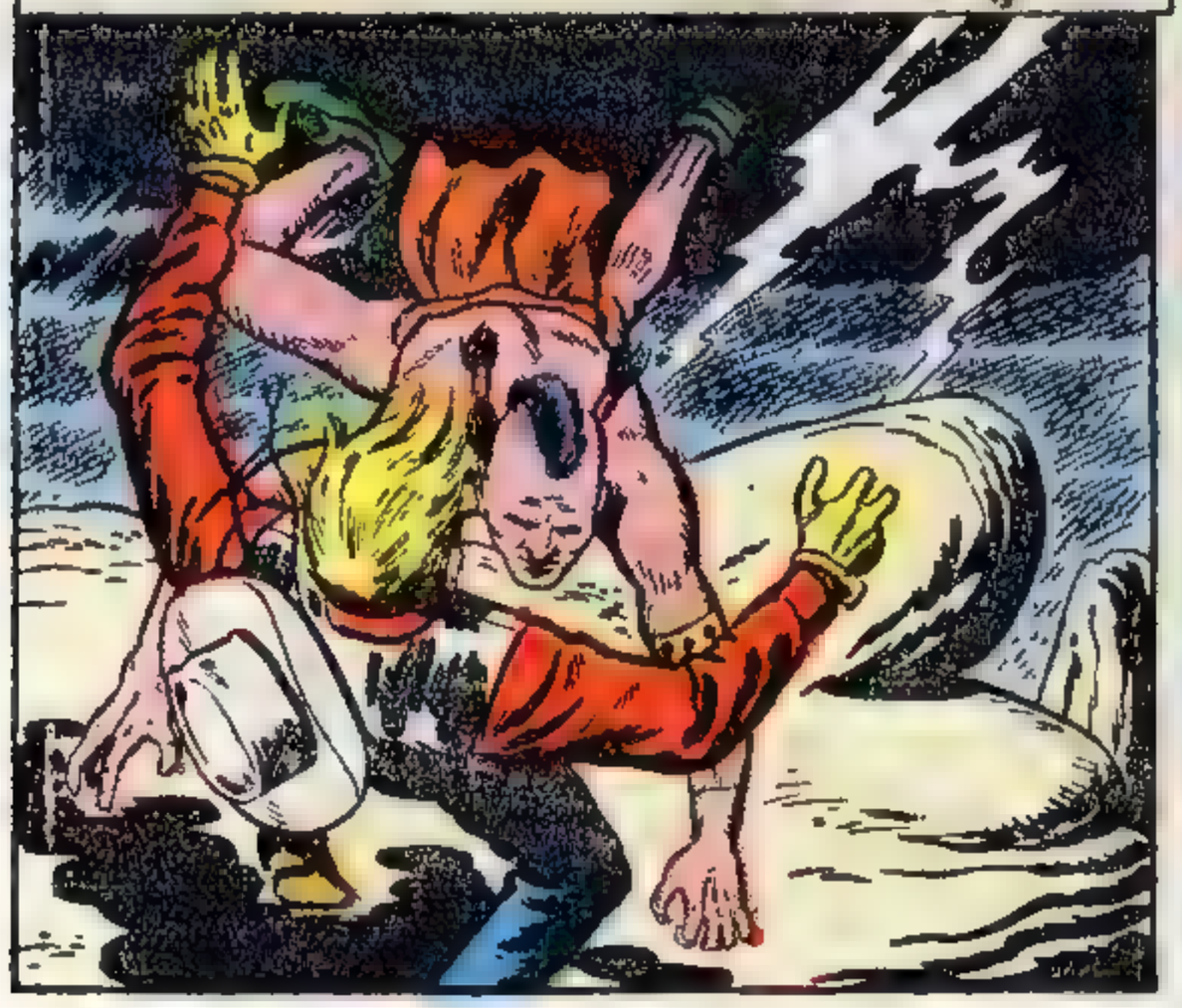
GIVE TO ME THE LIGHTNING OF THE HEAVENS, THE SWIFTNESS OF THE WINDS! LET ME NOT FORGET THAT THE WHITE MAN IS MY ENEMY, SWORN TO DIE BY MY HANDS UNTIL MY STRENGTH IS GONE! O-AHTON-AHI!

AND THE GODS ANSWERED...

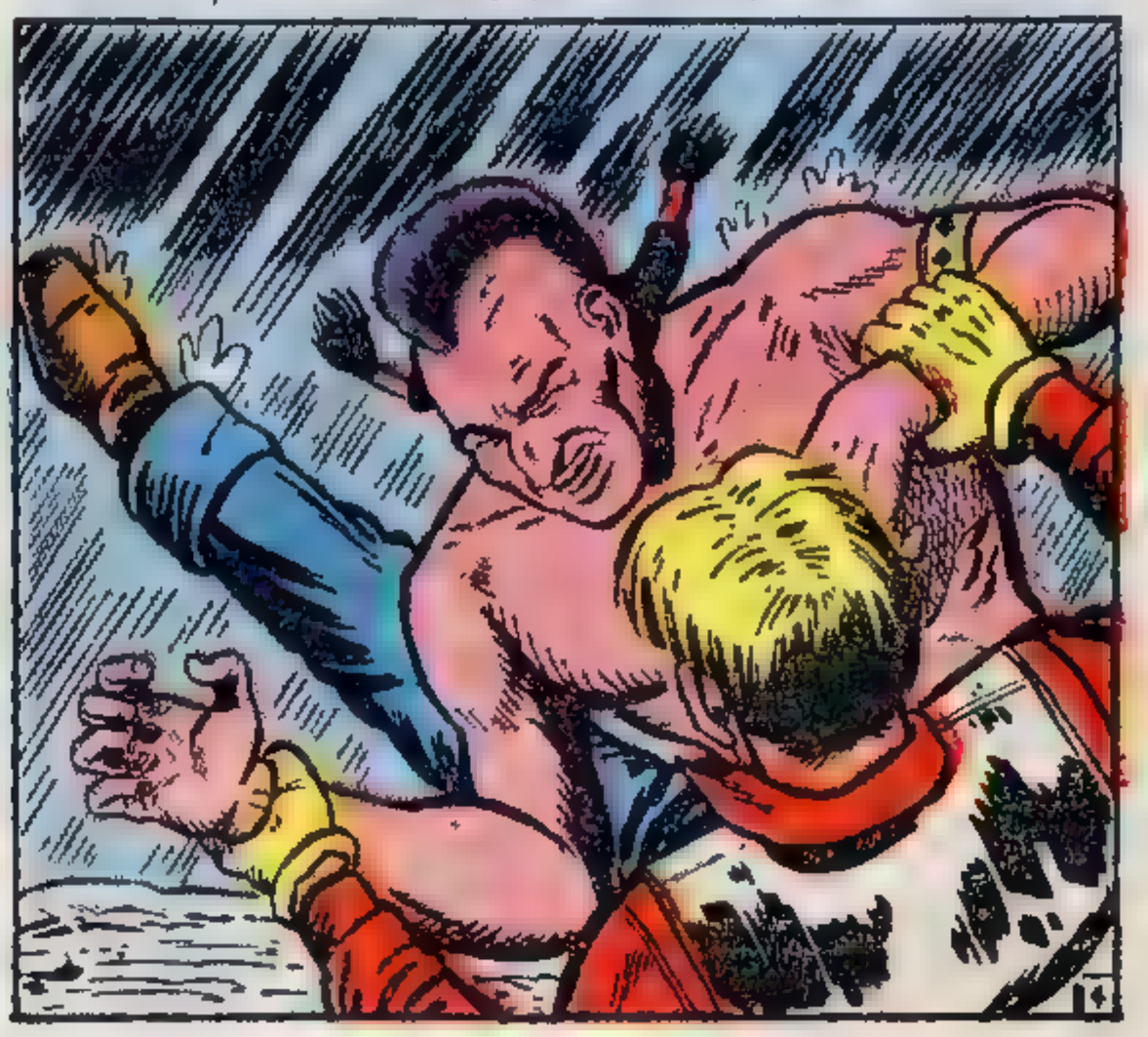
AND WHEN THE SAVAGE TURNED, THE GODS HAD ALREADY DELIVERED TO HIM HIS FIRST VICTIM...


THE GODS HAVE SPOKEN!
IN ANGER, NOT IN ENCOURAGEMENT! I FOLLOWED YOU HERE... AS A FRIEND, NOT AN ENEMY! THE VOW YOU HAVE TAKEN AGAINST WHITE MEN IS WRONG!

THE CHIEF MADE A MIGHTY LUNGE AT THE KID, HURTLING THROUGH THE AIR, AND STRIKING THE OUTLAW HARD! LIGHTNING STREAKED DOWN FROM THE BLACK SKIES...



THE TWO MEN TANGLED ON THE GROUND LIKE WILD ANIMALS, AS RAIN STARTED POURING DOWN ON THEM...



THIS WAS TO THE DEATH, AND NO WORDS WERE SPOKEN! THE SAVAGE FOUGHT LIKE A FIEND IMBUED WITH FURY, BUT THE OUTLAW FOUGHT BACK...

AS THOUGH TO ADD TERROR TO THE STARK DRAMA, THE ELEMENTS UNLEASHED THEIR OWN MIGHTY SPECTACLE...

LIKE TWO TITANS ETCHED AGAINST A SAVAGE ORGY OF VIOLENCE, THE STRUGGLE CONTINUED...

BOTH MEN TOPPLED AT THE SAME TIME, PLUNGING DOWN, DOWN, DOWN TOWARD THE SEETHING RIVER BELOW, LOCKED EVEN IN MID-AIR...

THEY STRUCK THE WATER TOGETHER, STILL LOCKED IN COMBAT! THE FOAMING CURRENT SPLASHED AROUND THE TWO OF THEM...

THEY BREACHED THE SURFACE, DRIPPING WET, GASHED AND VIVID AS THEY CONTINUED TO FIGHT WHILE THE ROARING TORRENT HURTLED BOTH DOWNSTREAM!

THEY GRIPPED EACH OTHER'S THROATS AND STRAINED MIGHTILY TO CRUSH LIFE FROM THE OTHER AT ARM'S LENGTH!

IT WAS THE OUTLAW WHO CONQUERED AND THE SAVAGE WHO SUFFERED DEFEAT, BUT THE VICTOR DID NOT RELINQUISH HIS HOLD...

G-GOTTA... MAKE... SHORE! CAN'T... LET... GO!

GET UP, RED BROTHER! I AM STILL YOUR FRIEND!

I HAVE LOST! WHY DO YOU NOT *KILL* ME?

I FOLLOWED YOU HERE TO ***SAVE*** YOU, NOT KILL YOU! I SPOKE THE TRUTH BEFORE, AND I SPEAK IT NOW... I AM YOUR FRIEND!

YOU ARE A MIGHTY WARRIOR! YOUR PEOPLE NEED YOU TO LEAD THEM! YOU CAN'T MAKE WAR ON ALL THE WHITE PEOPLE BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE! IT WOULD BRING EVIL TO WHITES AND REDSKINS ALIKE!

YOU SPEAK WORDS OF WISDOM!

TWICE YOU HAVE SAVED MY LIFE, AND NOW, BY THE SACRED ORDER OF THE RED DOG, YOU BECOME MY BROTHER AND MY PEOPLE'S FRIEND!

THE END

ATLAS FOR THE BEST IN WESTERN THRILLS LOOK FOR THE ATLAS SEAL ON THE COVER! ATLAS

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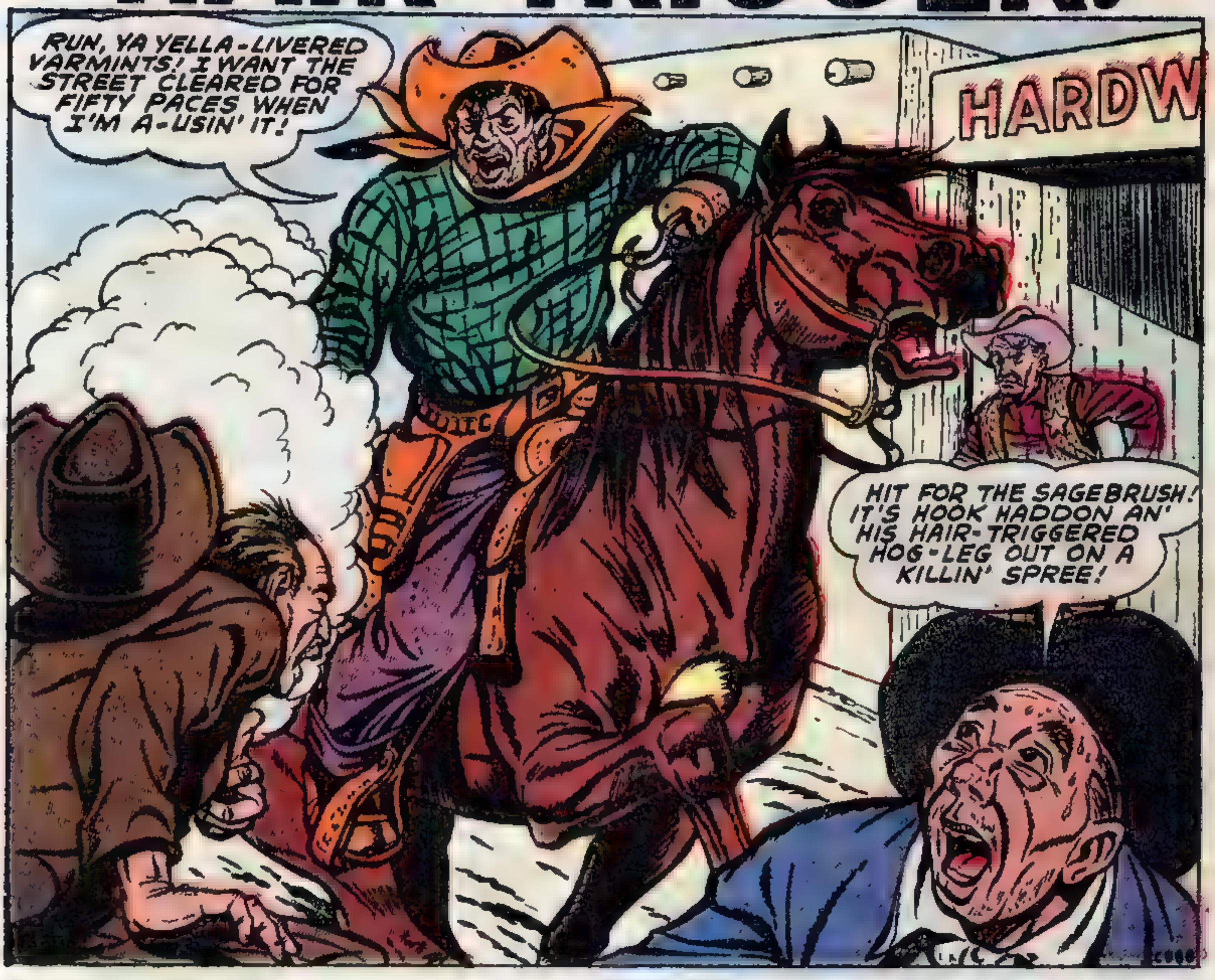
THE STARTLING STORY OF A MAN WHO RULED AN ENTIRE WESTERN TOWN WITH MURDER, FEAR, AND A .45 COLT WITH...

THE HAIR TRIGGER!


RUN, YA YELLA-LIVERED VARMINTS! I WANT THE STREET CLEARED FOR FIFTY PACES WHEN I'M A-USIN' IT!
HARDW
HIT FOR THE SAGEBRUSH! IT'S HOOK HADDON AN' HIS HAIR-TRIGGERED HOG-LEG OUT ON A KILLIN' SPREE!

THE HAIR TRIGGER SENT A .45 INTO SHERIFF MILLER...

IT SLAMMED A SLUG INTO A STRANGER IN TOWN...

AND THE LAST BEAN IN THE WHEEL CAUGHT JUDGE WALKER IN THE BACK...

YUH BLASTED KILLER! MEBBE YUH GOT EVERYBODY ELSE SPOOKED... BUT YUH AIN'T SCARIN' ME!

I AIN'T GOT A GUN... BUT THIS'LL STOP YUH!

OW-W!

HOOK HADDON YANKED THE PITCHFORK OUT OF HIS SHOULDER, AND THEN REINED HIS HORSE...

GET HIM, DEVIL! STONE HIM!!

DEVIL REARED UP ON HIS HIND LEGS AND SLAMMED DOWN ON THE FARMER...

MY PAW! YUH KILLED MY PAW, YUH DIRTY MURDERIN' SADDLE TRAMP! I'LL KILL YUH FOR THAT!

OW-W!

THEN HADDON'S HOOK LASHED OUT AND RIPPED ACROSS THE YOUTH'S FACE!

OW-W!

NOW IS THERE ANY MORE OF YUH WHO WANTA TASTE THE HOOK OR THE HAIR TRIGGER? EVERY TIME I RIDE INTO THIS HOLE FOR MY COLLECTIONS, SOMEBODY GETS BRAVE AN' FOOLISH ...AN' ENDS UP DEAD!

WHAT'VE I GOT TO DO TO CONVINCE YUH YOKELS THAT YUH'LL NEVER GET HOOK HADDON...NOT AS LONG AS I GOT MY HOOK... AN' MY HAIR TRIGGER!

NOW GET OUTTA MY WAY, YUH SAGE-BRUSH SKUNKS, SO I CAN GET MY MONTHLY DUES FROM THE BANK AN' SLAM OUTTA THIS DUST HOLE YUH CALL A TOWN!

HERE YOU ARE, MR. TROUT... $10,000 DOLLARS!

JUST THE AMOUNT I CAME FOR!

BUT-BUT THAT'S *MY* MONEY AND ...*OW-W!*

IT'S *MINE* NOW... AN' IF YUH DON'T QUIT FLAPPIN' YER JAWS, I'LL DEPOSIT YUH HERE PERMANENT!

THIS DINERO IS THE PREMIUM DUE ON THE INSURANCE POLICY THE TOWN TOOK OUT WIT' ME! IF YA MISS ONE PAYMENT... WELL, YUH RECALL WHAT HAPPENED TO REDWOOD CITY...

Y-YES! YOU... YOU.. I MEAN, IT... IT WAS DESTROYED BY FIRE!

YEAH! SO IF YUH DON'T WANT THE SAME "ACCIDENT" TO HAPPEN TO ROCKY GULCH, KEEP COLLECTIN' THE GOLD FROM THE SUCKERS IN TOWN AN' I'LL KEEP COLLECTIN' FROM YUH! ADIOS... SEE YUH NEXT MONTH!

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ANOTHER MONTH'S GONE... 'CAUSE HERE COMES HOOK HADDON! LET'S GET OFF'A THE STREET!

YEAH... AN' THAT STRANGER YONDER BETTER DO LIKEWISE OR HOOK'LL GUN HIM DOWN!

GET OFF THE STREET, SKUNK... OR I'LL BLAST YUH OFF!

START BLASTIN'!!

HADDON HAULED HIS TRIGGER-HAIRED .45 WITH THE SPEED OF A STRIKING RATTLER...

THE STRANGER SLAPPED LEATHER IN A BLUR...

BUT ONLY A SINGLE SHOT ECHOED THRU ROCKY GULCH... AND HOOK HADDON HUNCHED OVER AS IF HE HAD A BELLYACHE...

SUFFERIN' SAGEBRUSH! HE AN' HADDON DRAWED AT THE SAME TIME... BUT THE STRANGER BEAT HIM TO THE TRIGGER!

YEAH... HOW'D YUH DO IT, STRANGER?

BY USIN' THIS PEACEMAKER WITH THE MECHANISM FILED DOWN SO I DON'T HAVE TO PULL THE TRIGGER BACK MORE'N HAIR!

CRAWLIN' COYOTES! A... A HAIR TRIGGER! HE BEAT HADDON AT HIS *OWN GAME!*

THE CITIZENS OF ROCKY GULCH MADE THE STRANGER SHERIFF... AND ALL THE OUTLAWS STEERED CLEAR OF THE TOWN THAT HAD THE SHERIFF WITH THE HAIR TRIGGER...

THE END

ATLAS FOR THE BEST IN WESTERN THRILLS LOOK FOR THE ATLAS SEAL ON THE COVER! ATLAS

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(continued . . .)

and his cayuse plunged ahead. Then the whole mass of men got into motion.

The north-east pasture, as Battins knew, lay over a rise called the Tonto Ridge. Minutes later they hit the first slopes of the Ridge and shot up the smooth, grassy sides. An instant later they were over the top and again the whole charging mass of men and horses came to a jarring, abrupt halt.

Down in the valley that held most of Halton's north-east pasturage they saw some of the combined bunkhouse outfits trying to move the as yet-unpoisoned north - east herd toward the south pastures. Others were busy raking up dry locoweed leaves. There was no sign of the four masked men.

"They must have got away," Battins said morosely. He turned to Halton. "Sorry, Mike. Looks like there just aren't enough waddies to handle everything at once. Well, maybe, you won't lose too much on the west-pasture herd."

The ranch-owner shook his head dubiously. He knew the symptoms of locoweed poisoning. First a general lethargy, then rising irritation, finally madness and stampede and death.

"We don't find out who did it, Sheriff, they'll try again!"

"Look!" It was Cal Sanders, sitting up in his stirrups and pointing.

Visible as tiny black dots, four figures came over the far north rise of the north-east pasture.

"The masked gang!" Halton spluttered. "Slap leather, men!"

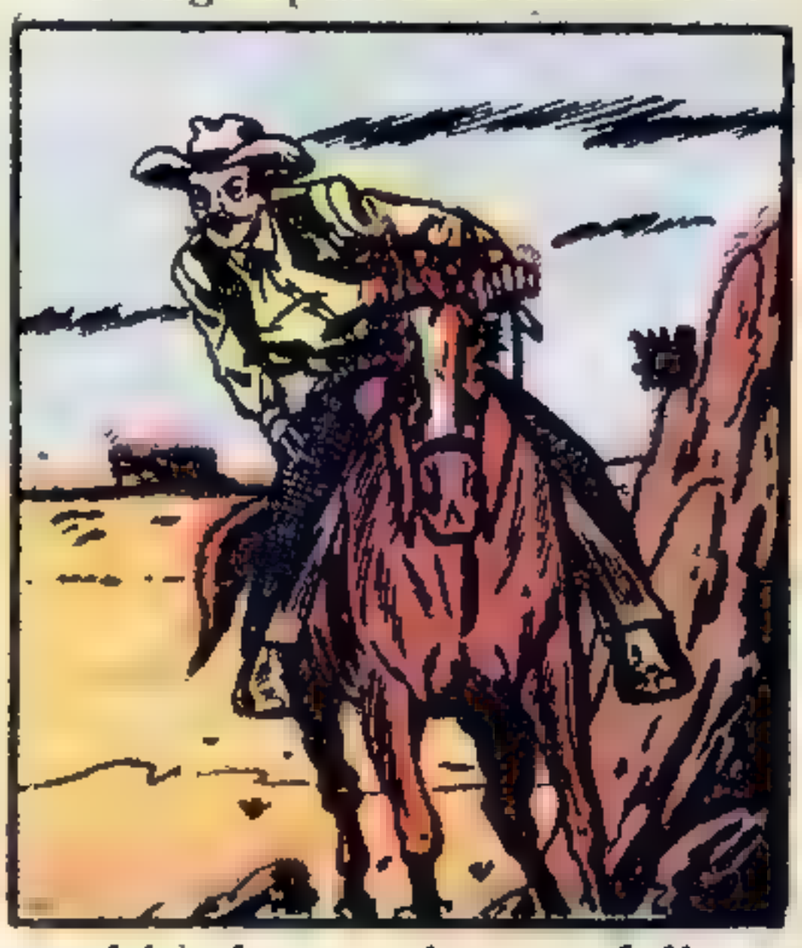
Instantly they were on their way again, thundering down into the valley and spreading out across the opposite rising slope toward the far boundary of Halton's spread. Behind the masked riders, they saw, rode the few bunkhouse boys that had been spared from out their Bar T outfit to cut the masked poisoners off.

Bullets whistled suddenly over Halton's head. He ducked, Saxby's cayuse, hit in the flank, collapsed suddenly.

"Don't stop!" Battins yelled. "Saxby's alright. Keep after 'em!"

At a roaring gallop they rode up the opposite slope, saw the four masked men trying desperately to escape down the other side across Wedridge's spread. At the same instant they spotted the remnants of the locoweed-infected western herd of Halton's Bar T outfit. There were over a hundred fifty head left, and they swept down into the far valley, shaking the ground. .

The four masked men were caught squarely in their path. They halted, changed direction too late. The herd swept over them like a juggernaut, headed straight for Wedridge's ranchhouse. With a scream of anguish Wedridge spurred his horse toward his house, the rest following. At a gallop he crossed into the path of the oncoming herd. Then, suddenly, his cayuse seemed to pause. The horse bucked, throwing Wedridge into the path of the herd. An instant later man and horse had disappeared beneath the pounding hoofs. The maddened herd coursed on.



With a terrible, grinding smash they collided with the mass of Wedridge's ranch buildings. Walls caved in, went down. The bunkhouse collapsed, the hay-barn fell in. The main house resisted, slowing down the herd's onward rush. With a sudden, swift lash, the leading cows pulled south, drawing the rest with them into the narrowing valley walls. Between them the poisoned remnant disappeared, to eventually be stopped by rock walls at the valley's extreme end and there die of madness and thirst.

Battins drew rein at the ranchhouse while others went to pick up the four bodies of the masked men and that of Wedridge. When the others returned with the bodies slung over saddlebows, he pointed to Wedridge's dead body.

"Didn't matter much how he died," Battins said to the astonished Halton, Horner and Saxby, the latter who had come up leading his shot-lamed horse. "He was the guilty one, Halton. You'll find the cellar of the bunkhouse filled with locoweed sacks disguised as feed. I just saw 'em. Wedridge's outfit wasn't involved. He must have hired those masked lobos to spread the dried leaves." He glanced down at the body of the dead rancher. "You know I suspected Wedridge ever since we left town!"

"Since we left town?" echoed Halton, astonished.

"Sure," the Sheriff said, "Wedridge came to help you because you asked him, because it would have looked bad it he hadn't. But I noticed his cayuse was running slow and jerky. And it finally collapsed in fever in the herd's path. That was locoweed disease! I knew that nobody but your own outfit had been on your infected pasturage until today. So I figured Wedridge's horse might have gotten some locoweed mixed in with his feed by mistake. And he did. The herd uncovered the bunkhouse cellar for us." He glanced down at the body again. "Probably he wanted to ruin you, Halton, so he could bid in your spread for a song. That would have made him the biggest land-owner hereabouts. In a year, the added income would have enabled him to own the whole valley." Battins smiled grimly. "Well, I reckon he's entitled to about six feet of it, now!"

THE END C-519

KID COLT OUTLAW

I WAS UP THAR WITH THE REST WHEN THEY WAS ABOUT TO HANG GAFFER LENNOX! HE WAS GUILTY OF MURDER, ARSON, HOSS THIEVIN' AN' WHAT-NOT! HE WAS GUILTY AS ALL GET-OUT, BUT WE WERE ALL AFRAID TO LOOK AT THAT TERRIBLE FACE OF HIS'N...

JACK KELLER

KC 540

HE STARTED HOLLERIN' WHEN THE NOOSE TIGHTENED AN' HIS VOICE SOUNDED AS WILD AS THE WIND THAT HOWLED AROUND GALLOWS HILL...

YE LISTEN TO ME...ALL OF YE! I'LL BE BACK TO TAKE VENGEANCE! I'LL REMEMBER EVERY FACE HERE...AN' I'LL BE BACK! REMEMBER THAT!!

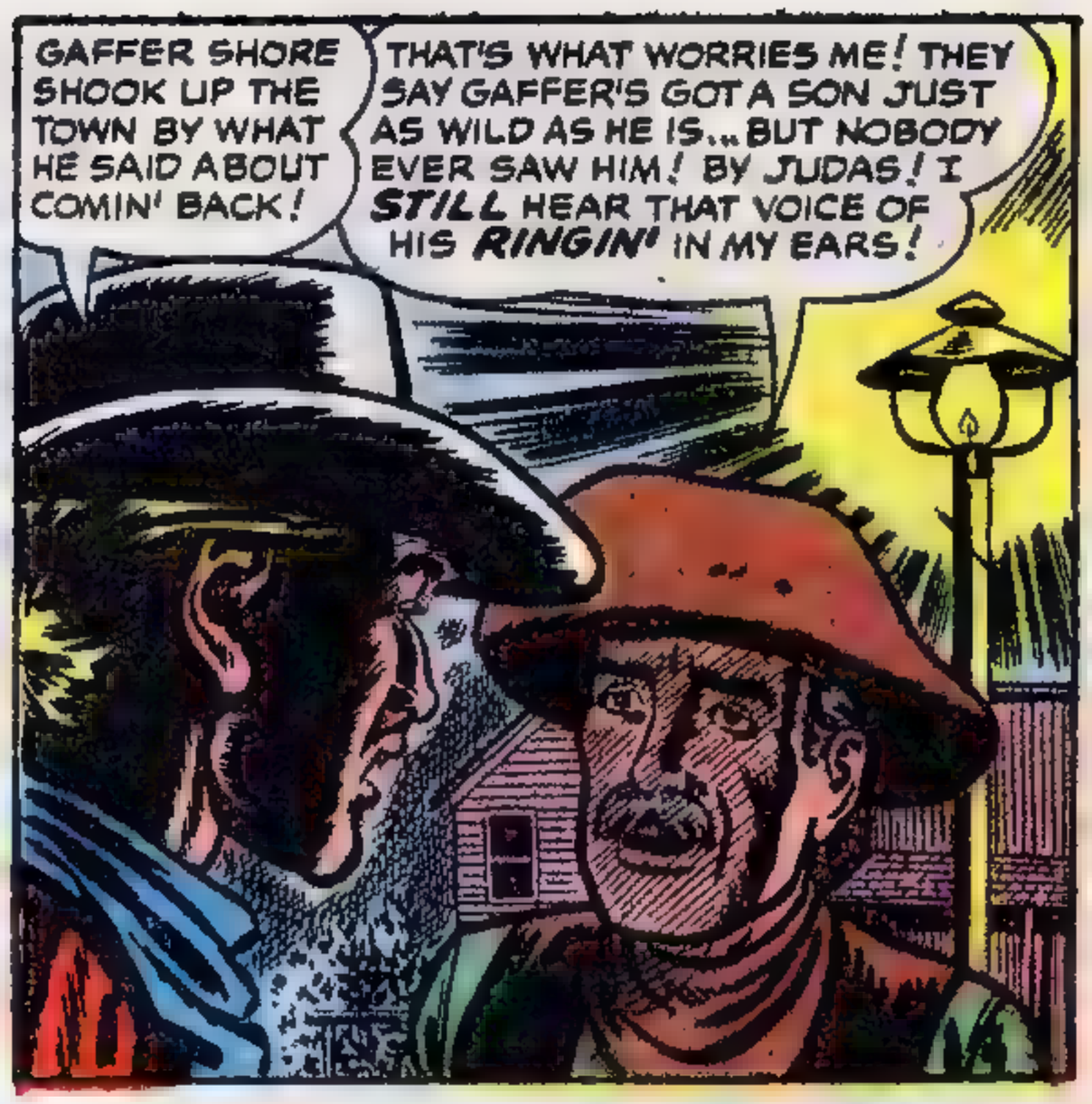
I DON'T RECKON THAR WAS A SINGLE PAIR OF EYES TURNED ON OLE GAFFER WHEN HE SWUNG! WE WAS ALL TOO SCARED TO LOOK...

EEE-AARRRRRRGGH!!

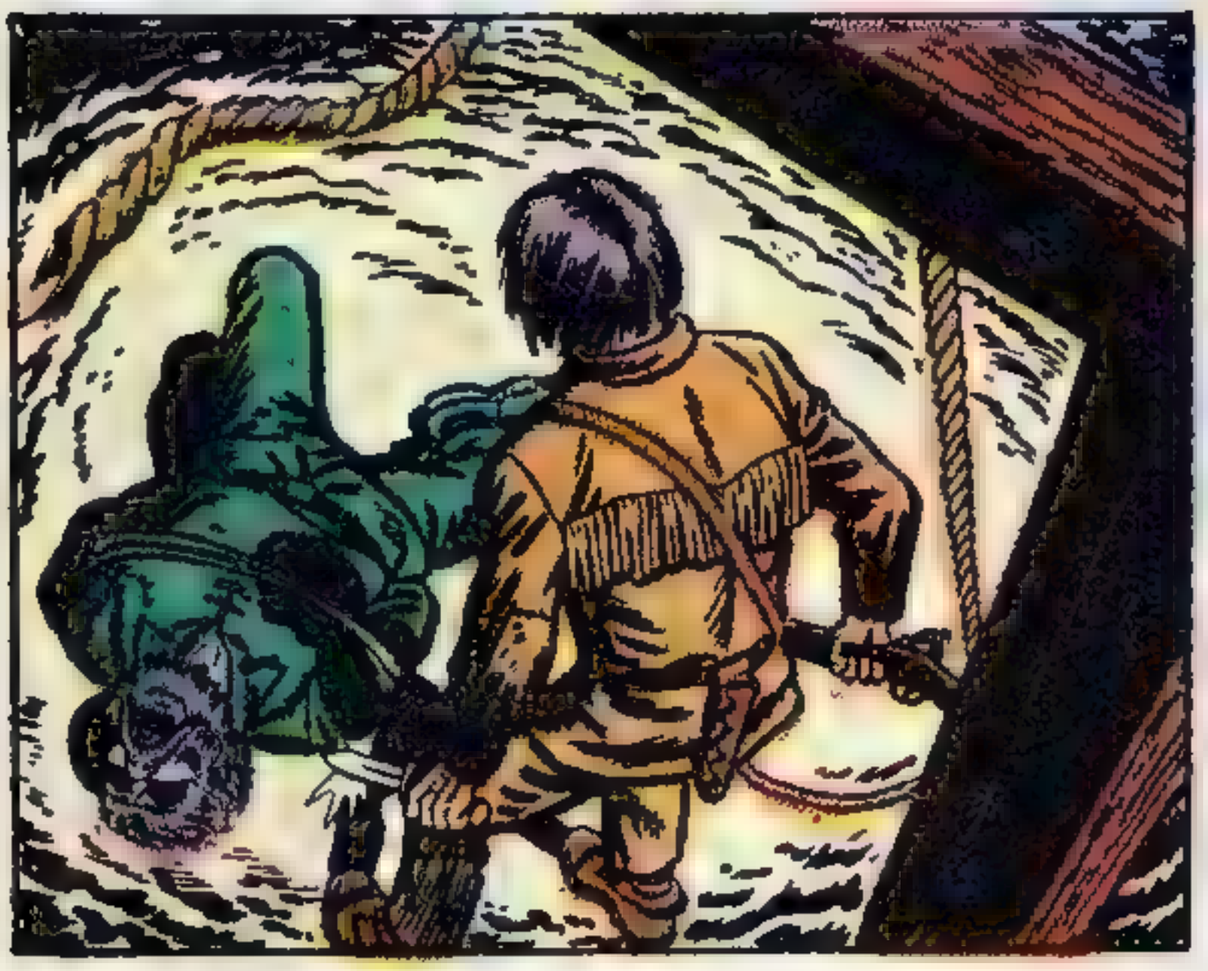
IT WAS ALL OVÉR! GAFFER LENNOX WAS DEAD BUT A HEAVY FEELIN' HUNG OVER THE HILL... LIKE GAFFER WAS ***LAUGHIN'*** AT US!

GAFFER SHORE SHOOK UP THE TOWN BY WHAT HE SAID ABOUT COMIN' BACK!

THAT'S WHAT WORRIES ME! THEY SAY GAFFER'S GOT A SON JUST AS WILD AS HE IS... BUT NOBODY EVER SAW HIM! BY JUDAS! I ***STILL*** HEAR THAT VOICE OF HIS ***RINGIN'*** IN MY EARS!

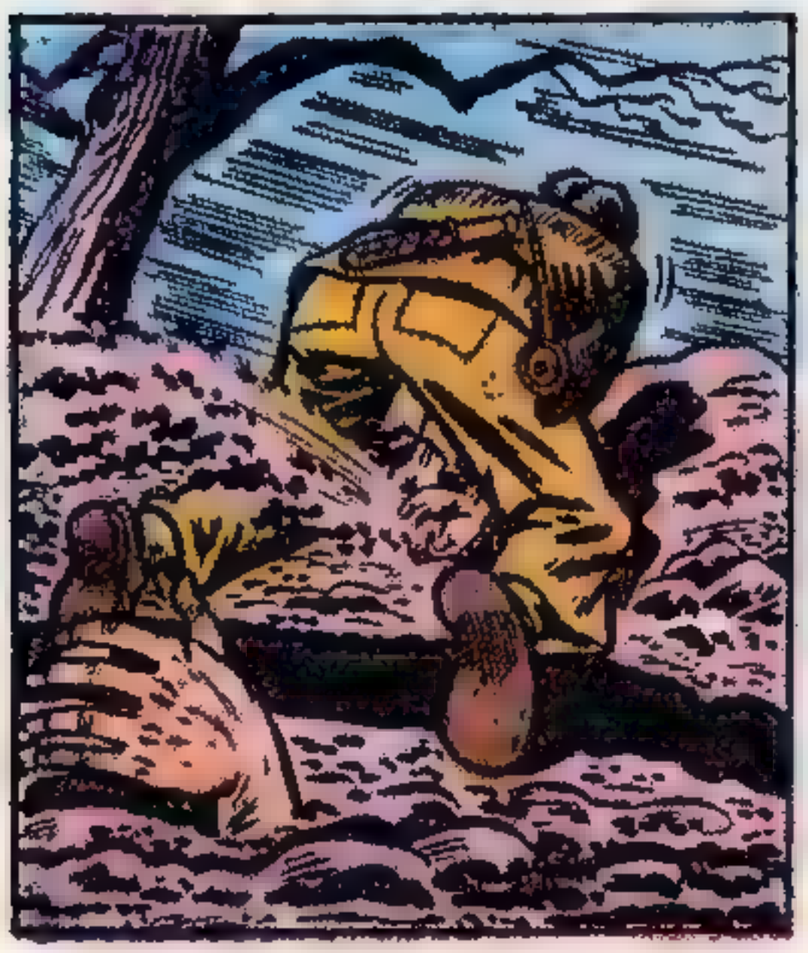


THAT NIGHT I WAS TAKIN' A SHORT CUT AROUND GALLOWS HILL WHEN I HEARD A NOISE UP ON TOP! THERE WAS A FULL MOON OUT AN' IT WAS EASY TO SEE WHAT WAS GOIN' ON...



I HEER'D YE, PAW! THEY DONE KILLED YE, BUT YE'RE ALIVE INSIDE ME, PAW! I'LL BE THE SWORD OF YORE VENGEANCE! YE'LL COME BACK... ***IN ME!***

I DON'T RECKON EITHER OF THEM LENNOXES WAS HUMAN! CABE LENNOX SCRATCHED OUT A HOLE IN THE SAND AN' GRAVEL AND BURIED HIS PA IN IT...



AN' THAT NIGHT THE ***SWORD OF VENGEANCE*** STRUCK! SHERIFF JEFF MAITLAND WAS ITS FIRST VICTIM...

JUDGE TOLLIVER WAS NEXT! HE GOT IT THROUGH THE WINDOW OF HIS HOUSE...

BY THE TIME MORNIN' CAME AROUND, PINE BLUFF WAS BURYIN' SIX OF ITS CITIZENS, AND THE KILLER WAS STILL ROAMIN' THE COUNTRYSIDE...

I WAS AT THE CEMETERY WHEN I SEEN THIS LONG, RANGY HOMBRE LOOKIN' AROUND! IT WAS *KID COLT*, AN' I KNEW HIS MIND WAS FAR AWAY FROM THE GRIEF ALL AROUND HIM...

WHEN COLT LOPED AWAY IT WAS WITH THE GAIT OF A MAN WHO'S GOT SOMETHIN' *IMPORTANT* TO DO AND PLACES TO GO...

KEEP A-MOVIN', STEEL! THE KILLER JUST PICKED UP OUR SCENT AN' HE'S TRYIN' TO CLOSE IN FOR A SHOT...

WHAAAANG!

THUD

THE OUTLAW SLITHERED OUT OF HIS SADDLE AN' BEGAN DIGGIN' THAT ROUND OUT OF THE TREE...

I'LL KNOW IN A MINUTE IF MY 'HUNCH WAS RIGHT!

A FLATTENED BALL DROPPED INTO HIS HAND, AN' RIGHT THERE KID COLT KNEW HE WAS PLAYIN' TAG WITH DEATH...

CABE LENNOX! HE'S THE ONLY HOMBRE IN THESE PARTS WHO STILL USES A KENTUCKY RIFLE AN' HOME-MADE ROUNDS!

WE'LL LET HIM THINK WE'RE HIGH-TAILIN' FER HOME...THEN WE'LL DOUBLE BACK AN' PICK UP HIS TRAIL, STEEL!

A WOLF DON'T BED HISSELF DOWN JUST ANYWHERE, AN' NEITHER DID CABE LENNOX! HIS ROOST WAS HIGHER'N A EAGLE'S NEST... WAY UP ON TOP OF SATAN'S SADDLE, AN' THAT'S WHAR HE HEADED...

IT WAS GETTIN' ALONG TOWARDS SUNSET WHEN THE OUTLAW MADE A SHOWIN' ON TOP OF SATAN'S SADDLE...

TURN AROUND, LENNOX!

UHHH?

YOU GOT NO TIME TO RELOAD, LENNOX... AN' I DON'T SHOOT A MAN AFTER HIS LAST ROUND'S GONE!

CRACK!

CABE WAS UP LIKE A BIG CAT, BUT HIS FIRST SPRING MISSED THE MARK!

YE'RE ONE OF THEM WHAT KILLED MY PAW! HE'S ALIVE... IN *ME*, AN' HE'S COMIN' TO *GET* YE!

LET HIM COME!

THERE WAS NO QUARTER ASKED AN' NONE GIVEN... NO HOLD BARRED AN' NONE HELD BACK! CABE HAD THE EDGE IN WEIGHT AN' HEIGHT, BUT THE OUTLAW WAS HARDER TO HOLD THAN AN EEL DIPPED IN GREASE...

UNNNHH!

BUT SUDDENLY, THEM LONG, SINEWY, POWERFUL HANDS OF CABE'S CLOSED LIKE THE JAWS OF A VISE AN' THE OUTLAW WAS TRAPPED...

THE OUTLAW KICKED AN' SQUIRMED, BUT IT WARN'T NO USE! FER A LONG MINUTE CABE HELD HIM OVER THE CLIFF, AN' THEN HEAVED HIM...

LENNOX WENT BACK TO THE FIRE AN' SANK DOWN IN A HEAP! HE DIDN'T MOVE A MUSCLE... JUST SAT THERE AN' STARED INTO THE DYIN' COALS...

HE WAS STILL SITTIN' THERE AN HOUR LATER WHEN HE HEARD A SOUND BEHIND HIM... BUT BY THEN IT WAS TOO LATE TO MOVE...

THERE WAS A LEDGE... AN' SOME BRUSH... ABOUT THIRTY FEET BELOW! YOU... SHOULD HAVE ... LOOKED OVER THE EDGE TO MAKE SURE, LENNOX... BUT IT'S TOO LATE NOW!

THE OUTLAW STOPPED NEAR THE EDGE, AN' THEN IN ONE LAST, MIGHTY SPASM OF STRENGTH, HE SENT CABE LENNOX TUMBLIN' DOWN...

AHYEEEEIIIII!

HOW DO I KNOW? WAL, I SAW HIM WITH *MY OWN EYES!* WHEN COLT LEFT THAT CEMETERY... PINE BLUFF, I FOLLOWED HIM! 'COURSE, I DIDN'T GO TO THE *TOP*, BUT I STAYED DOWN HERE AN FIGGERED THINGS OUT! AND IT ALL HAPPENED *JUST* LIKE I TOLD YA!

THE END

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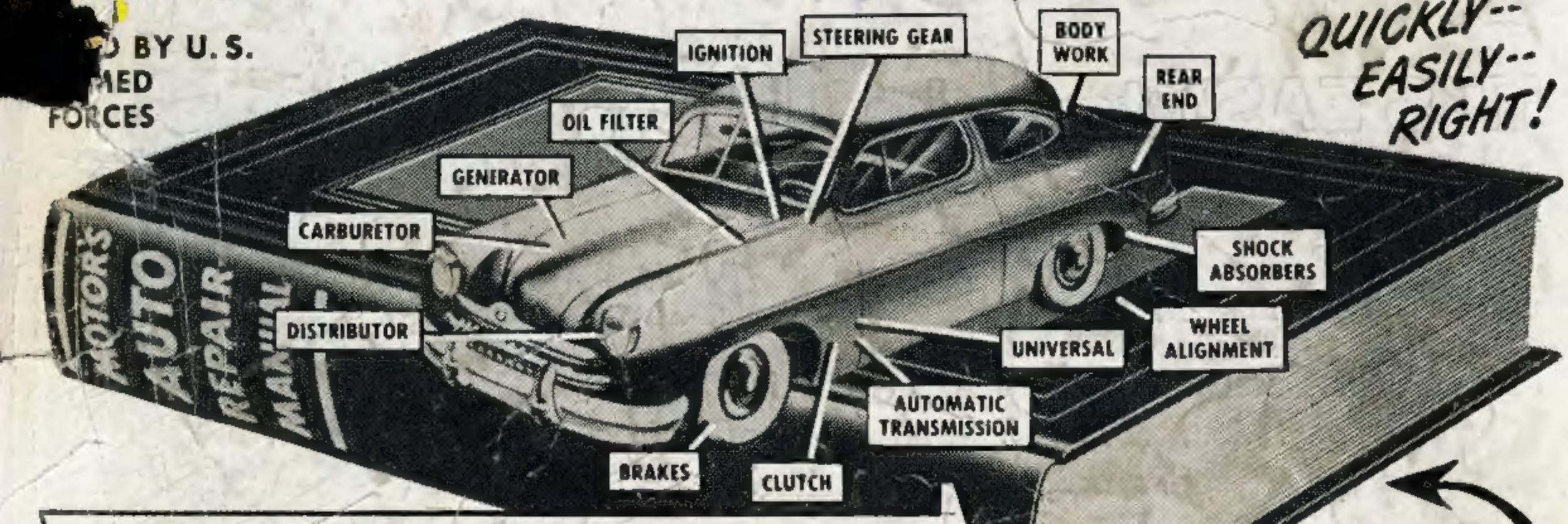

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